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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General to dispatch mission to Kuwait at Government's request to assess loss of civilians and infrastructure damage during Iraqi occupation.

+ Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait informs United Nations that his Government has resumed functions of State.

+ Talks to define repatriation procedures for all prisoners of war and civilian detainees begin in Riyadh under auspices of International Committee of Red Cross.

+ Human Rights Commission condemns Iraqi violations in Kuwait; also adopts resolutions on situations in Iran, southern Lebanon, El Salvador and Albania, among other issues.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is to send a high-level mission to Kuwait to assess the loss of civilians and infrastructure damage during Iraqi occupation.

The decision was made in response to a request by the Kuwaiti Government, and in response to the Security Council which had asked the Secretary-General to respond positively to that request.

In a statement yesterday, the Secretary-General's Spokesman said the task of the mission was to receive pertinent information from the Kuwaiti authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations, for an assessment of the losses in life during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. In addition, the mission would gather information on Iraqi practices against the civilian population in Kuwait. It would also assess the scope and nature of the damages that were inflicted on Kuwait's infrastructure during the period.

The mission, to be led by Abdulrahim A. Farah, former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, will travel to the region early next week. It will include representatives and technical advisors from a number of United

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Nations humanitarian organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

It is the second United Nations mission to be sent to the Persian Gulf after the recent hostilities. Last Thursday, the Secretary-General announced that he was sending Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari on a humanitarian mission to assess the needs of the population in Iraq and Kuwait. Mr. Ahtisaari left New York today.

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The Kuwaiti Government has informed the United Nations that it is resuming the functions of State, and is directing the affairs of the nation from Kuwait City. During Iraqi occupation, the Kuwaiti Government was in exile in Saudi Arabia.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanked the United Nations for the role it played in liberating Kuwait. That action, he said, had reconfirmned the purposes and objectives of the United Nations Charter and had shown the importance of the Organization in maintaining international peace and security.

In a separate development, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called on the Government of Kuwait to take immediate action to guarantee the safety of Palestinians living in that country.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, Nasser Al-Kidwa, said a campaign of terror and harassment was being conducted against Palestinians in Kuwait City. The violence was being waged by armed vigilantes and some elements of the Kuwaiti army. The PLO representative said the majority of Palestinians in Kuwait were long-time residents and should be protected. It was the responsibility of the Kuwaiti Government, the foreign forces present in Kuwait and the Security Council to guarantee their safety and security.

In another letter received by the Secretary-General, the Government of Kuwait rejected allegations by PLO that official authorities in Kuwait had initiated "certain practices" against the Palestinian community living in Kuwait. The letter said Kuwait's Minister for Foreign Affairs had declared the allegations were false, and deliberately circulated by irresponsible parties in Palestinian circles, to "spread a spirit of resentment and disunity" and to "cast themselves as defenders of the fraternal Palestinian people".

The Foreign Minister said Kuwait had embraced expatriates from all parts of the world, including the Palestinian community, and provided them with the means to make a decent and comfortable living. That was on the basis of its belief in its Arab, Islamic and humanitarian obligations, and its constant commitment to Arab values and principles.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross reported today that talks under its auspices between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities and coalition representatives to define procedures for the repatriation of all prisoners of war and civilian detainees had begun this morning in Riyadh.

The Committee also announced that it had sent a team to Basra in Iraq to assess humanitarian needs there. The team was to be followed by a convoy carrying medicines and food.

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The Commission on Human Rights, continuing its session in Geneva, has strongly condemned the Iraqi authorities and occupying forces for the grave violations of human rights against the Kuwaiti people and nationals of other States.

The Commission also acted yesterday on resolutions concerning, among other issues, the human rights situations in southern Lebanon, Cuba, Romania, Iraq, El Salvador, Albania, Haiti and Afghanistan.

By the resolution on the situation of human rights in Kuwait under Iraqi occupation, the Commission strongly condemned, in particular, the acts of torture, arbitrary arrests, summary executions and disappearances. It demanded that Iraq comply with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the contemporary norms of international law.

The Commission decided to appoint an individual of recognized international standing as special rapporteur with a mandate to examine the human rights violations committed in occupied Kuwait by the invading and occupying forces of Iraq and to report as soon as possible to the General Assembly and to the Commission on Human Rights at its next session.

Abdul Al-Kadhi (Iraq) said the resolution was filled with "baseless, pointless and political allegations"; Iraq had agreed to all Security Council resolutions and had accepted the help of humanitarian organizations. The resolution was adopted by 41 votes in favour 1 against, with no abstentions.

In the other resolutions, the Commission condemned the continued Israeli violations of human rights in southern Lebanon. It noted particularly the arbitrary detention of civilian populations and called on Israel to end such practices and to begin an immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal from all Lebanese territory. Israel was asked to facilitate the humanitarian mission of International Committee of the Red Cross.

In a resolution on the situation of human rights in El Salvador, the Commission expressed serious concern at the persistence of politically motivated violations of human rights, such as summary executions, abductions

and enforced disappearances. It urged the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) to continue their dialogue and to work towards ensuring democratic elections scheduled for 10 March next year.

A resolution on the situation of human rights in Albania called on the Government of that country to free all political prisoners and adopt, as soon as possible, legislative and administrative measures to meet the requirements under international law.

At today's meeting, the Commission decided to continue consideration of the human rights situation in Iran, noting with concern the allegations of violations and requesting its Special Representative, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, to maintain his contacts and cooperation with the Government of Iran. The Commission also welcomed the full cooperation extended by the Government of Iran to the Special Representative.

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